



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

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<http://ct.gov/dmv>



***Testimony of Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner Melody A. Currey
Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs Public Hearing
February 10, 2011***

Proposed Bill No. 5343

An Act Concerning Veterans' License Plates For Active Members of the Armed Forces

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) appreciates the spirit of this bill, which would allow for any member of the armed forces to be issued a special veterans' license plate. Those men and women who have served our country in the armed forces, and who continue to serve, deserve constant recognition and our deepest gratitude. However, DMV would like to make this committee aware of concerns that would make this proposed program extremely difficult to properly administer.

DMV is required by state law, under Section 14-20b, to issue a veterans' license plate at the request of a veteran as defined in Connecticut State Statute under subsection (a) of section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran. DMV requires each vehicle owner requesting such a set of plates to provide a Certificate of Honorable Release or Discharge From Active Duty, otherwise known as a "DD-214 form." This is the primary form that DMV uses to identify a veteran as defined in state law.

Under this bill, DMV would have to establish a procedure to properly identify an active member of the armed forces before issuing a set of special license plates. It is currently unclear what document or documents will be required.

Once the set of plates is issued as outlined in this bill, DMV's primary concern would be the task of identifying those armed forces members who have been dishonorably discharged or who are no longer entitled to such a set of plates. There is currently no mechanism for reporting the status of an active member of the armed forces to DMV.

Furthermore, if DMV were able to identify a special plate-holder who is no longer entitled to the special set of plates, the agency would have to establish a system to revoke the registration of a vehicle with a set of the special plates established under this bill and presumably re-issue a standard set of plates.

In addition, DMV recognizes the special status that members of the armed forces hold for their work. However, there is no guarantee that DMV will be able to reclaim the special set of plates that identifies an individual who may ultimately not be entitled those plates.